

President of the General Conference

Chairperson of the Executive Board

Director General

Excellencie's

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the government of Aruba I thank the Unesco for this distinguished platform, having the status of associate member. As a small non independent country in the Caribbean we have recently taken the decision to belong to the cluster office of the Caribbean in Kingston, Jamaica, where there are other non independent or more contemporary independent small island states. And since we returned to the Kingston office we are very open to collaborate with the other countries of the Caribbean and we are still having good contact with the Havana Unesco Office.

Together with Curacao, side by side, we will ask for more participatory input of the associate members. And together we are in the process of ratifying the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. We have also ratified the Convention of Intangible Cultural Heritage and together with Curacao and Bonaire we are trying to put cultural expressions of the creole language Papiamento on the Unesco List of Cultural Heritage for Humanity.

Following the Unesco principle of mother tongue based education Aruba has decided to give a prominent status of our local language Papiamento in our educational system. From August 2019 our children will learn to read and write in their mother tongue Papiamento. We call this school model SAM, Scol Arubano Multilingual, the multilingual aruban school.

We have issued this year the PEN 2030, Plan Educacion Nacional 2030, our national strategic 10 year educational plan, which is alligned with the SDG's of the Unesco planned to become a reality in 2030. As Minister of Education, Science and Sustainable Development, my ministry expresses that education can not be separated from sustainable development, education and SDG's have to go hand in hand, education has to serve the goal of sustainable development.

We have to go an extra mile on this matter. We have also issued the VEC 2050, the Vision Economia Circular 2050, circular economy vision for the year 2050. Another name for sustainable development is according to our opinion circular economy. Development based on the logic of growth can not be sustainable. We have to replace our system based on consumerism and throw away products, with a new system based on a new life style, more simple, following the idea of reduce, reuse and recycle. We will take may be one generation to reach this, we have to educate our future generations to save our planet.

Education for sustainable development, there is no other way. No man is an island, we have to educate all so that all can take care of this unique planet in the universe where life is posible. For us coming from a small island in the Caribbean Sea, the first victims sharing a doom scenario of disappearance due to climate change, we urge the Unesco: please put he challenge of small islands as a global priority, leave no one behind, leave no island behind. Masha danki!